ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF E-PRESCRIBING ON PATIENT ADHERENCE AND CO-PAY SAVINGS PROGRAMS

By McKesson Patient Relationship Solutions
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INTRODUCTION

Fueled by regulatory changes, federal incentives, and advancements in technology, e-Prescribing has seen explosive growth in the last five years.

How does the increasing adoption of e-Prescribing change the landscape of patient adherence and pharma marketing? In this whitepaper, we will explore the implications of e-Prescribing on patient adherence and co-pay savings programs and how important considerations for e-Prescribing in six areas will impact the way pharma companies engage with patients and physicians.

SIX AREAS INFLUENCED BY E-PREScribing:

1. Increases in First Fill Pick-Ups
2. Improved Access to Data
3. A New Channel for Coupon Delivery
4. A New and Scalable Means for Reaching No-See Prescribers
5. Challenges with Integrating Relationship Management (RM) Programs
6. Accelerated Digital Transformation of Co-pay Cards, Coupons, Vouchers and Other Patient Materials
1. INCREASES IN FIRST FILL PICK-UPS:

E-Prescribing has given some healthcare stakeholders cause for concern that taking the physical reminder — the paper prescription — out of the equation would remove the patient reminder to pick up the prescription at the pharmacy. The good news is that a 2011 study of patient adherence showed that first fill adherence actually improved by 10% for prescriptions sent electronically.1

A couple of factors may be at play in the improvement. First, simplifying the process for the patient may have driven improved first fill adherence. From a patient perspective, e-Prescribing saves them time and multiple of trips to the pharmacy. Patients who previously dropped their paper prescription off at the pharmacy and then returned later for their pick-up now only need to visit once. Second, unlike paper-based prescriptions, all e-prescriptions reach the pharmacy. With prescriptions sent electronically, the pharmacist has all the information they need to fill the script and they routinely reach out to patients by phone or with automated systems to remind them to pick up their prescription.

2. IMPROVED ACCESS TO DATA:

The phenomenon of the “leaky bucket” of adherence is well known in the industry. As illustrated in Exhibit 1 below, written prescription volume leakage begins immediately after the prescription is handed to the patient. Of prescriptions written by physicians, some 30% to 50% never make it to the pharmacy. With e-Prescriptions, 100% reach the pharmacy. According to a 2011 study led by Surescripts, 76.5% of e-Prescriptions are picked up by patients at the pharmacy; a 10% increase in patient first fill medication adherence among physicians who adopted e-prescribing technology. Since 100% of e-Prescriptions reach the pharmacy, pharmacists can and often do reach out to patients to ‘remind’ them to pick up their filled prescription.

No matter what happens after the e-Prescription is transmitted to the pharmacy, healthcare stakeholders now have access to the prescribing activity that was once clouded by patient actions or inaction. Activity data include volumes of prescriptions sent electronically to pharmacies and fill rates for these prescriptions—without the prescription leakage previously described.
In addition, brands with eCoupon programs can gain insight into the number of coupon offers sent to the pharmacy with an e-Prescription, printed in the physician's office, sent to a patient's email address or cell phone, number of coupon offers redeemed and the number of new patients utilizing the coupon.

This new data will provide brand managers with a clearer picture of patient behavior, provide additional transparency around the writing habits of e-prescribers, and offer fresh insights on prescription fill rates, which may create new opportunities to influence adherence and increase patient engagement.

How does e-Prescribing combined with live sampling impact the data? Even with the advent of free vouchers, which allow patients to pick up their sample at the pharmacy rather than at the physician's office, use of live samples continues to be one of the most common marketing tactics in use today.

So what happens if a live sample is provided and the prescription is sent electronically? It may depend on the amount of samples provided, but it is likely we'll see some of these prescriptions linger at the pharmacy, being forgotten by the patient or considered abandoned and then ultimately restocked. Either way, this phenomenon may blur the new data and should be a consideration for brand marketers.

At the same time, through e-Prescribing, brands have the opportunity to reach new patients by offering free trial offer vouchers during the e-Prescribing process and the opportunity to provide CRM program enrollment for on-going prescription savings and support.
3. A NEW CHANNEL FOR COUPON DELIVERY:

Traditionally, co-pay cards and vouchers were delivered to prescribers, through pharma reps to be handed out to patients. Then, with digital technology and a shift to a direct-to-patient approach, coupons and vouchers are now often found online on brand websites, via banner ads, or in targeted print magazines.

Could e-Prescribing be the next technology to change the distribution of coupons? The change in prescription workflow has opened up new opportunities for pharma to engage with healthcare providers. New services such as Physicians Interactive’s eCoupon™ now offer pharma marketers an alternative means for delivering coupons and vouchers to prescribers.

With the eCoupon solution, physicians are presented coupons for drugs they are prescribing to patients within their e-Prescribing or Electronic Health Record (EHR) platform. Unlike cards stored in a sample closet or early digital solutions that gave prescribers access to coupons via a web portal, these new solutions provide coupons without interrupting prescriber workflow. Offers are delivered directly to the pharmacy along with the prescription. Offers can also be shared with the patient as a printed copy, email or text message. Providing the offer to the patient, not only acts as a reminder, but also keeps the patient in the driver’s seat by empowering them to receive the savings they expect.

4. A NEW AND SCALABLE MEANS FOR REACHING ‘NO-SEE’ PRESCRIBERS:

The e-Prescribing channel for coupons and vouchers can help brands reach previously inaccessible prescribers with offers and messages. There are brand-sponsored web portals administered through a limited number of restricted access facilities today. The web portal model is typically implemented one facility at a time which limits scalability. The other challenge with this model is lack of integration with prescriber workflow as prescriptions are written. Unlike web portals, integrated e-Prescribing adherence solutions such as Physicians Interactive’s eCoupon become part of prescriber workflow and can give brands scalable access to ‘no-see’ e-Prescribers who use e-Prescribing or Electronic Health Record (EHR) systems across a multitude of facilities.
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The dramatic growth of e-Prescribing is having a significant impact on the pharmaceutical industry. A record 788 million prescriptions were routed electronically by office-based physicians in 2012. With continued use and growth, e-Prescribing undoubtedly opens up new opportunities and challenges for pharma marketers.

Early studies have shown how e-Prescribing can help to boost first-fill adherence and improve insights into the path of a prescription from initiation to fill rates. Technologies that integrate patient savings offers and information into the prescriber’s workflow open new channels for engaging with prescribers and patients. They may help facilitate more meaningful physician-patient interactions, increased patient adherence and better health outcomes.

e-Prescribing is also beginning to impact pharma marketing strategies and plans. It brings with it opportunities along with challenges including those highlighted in this paper. Looking ahead, pharma marketers need to integrate print and digital media while being cognizant of how their marketing strategies will align in order to optimize patient and prescriber engagement.
WORKS CITED

2. Secrets of Success on the EMR Journey to Meaningful Use: Leading Hospital CIOs Reveal Key Lessons Learned, Accenture Health 2011
4. Manhattan Research: Taking the Pulse® U.S. 2012 study

McKesson Patient Relationship Solutions (MPRS) is a unique division of McKesson Corporation focused on helping pharmaceutical manufacturers reach patients to drive acquisition and adherence for their brands. MPRS solutions include co-pay savings and sample programs, behavioral-based patient engagement, print and digital communications, contact center support and outreach, pharmacy-based patient-support.

For more information, visit our website at www.mckesson.com/mprs.